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BATMAN
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HEADHUNTER!
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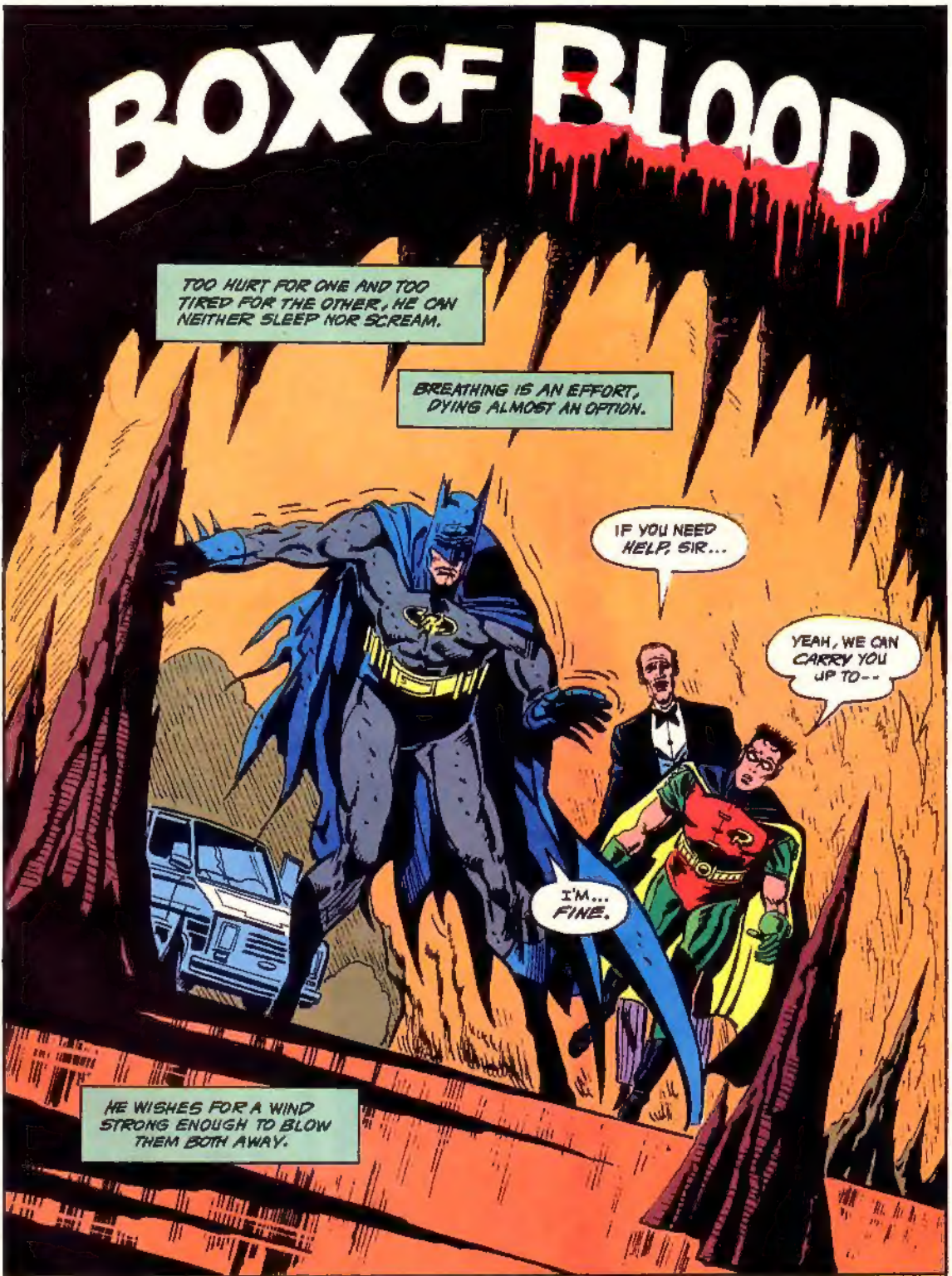
BOX OF BLOOD
TOO HURT FOR ONE AND TOO TIRED FOR THE OTHER, HE CAN NEITHER SLEEP NOR SCREAM.
BREATHING IS AN EFFORT, DYING ALMOST AN OPTION.
IF YOU NEED HELP, SIR...
YEAH, WE CAN CARRY YOU UP TO--
I'M... FINE.
HE WISHES FOR A WIND STRONG ENOUGH TO BLOW THEM BOTH AWAY.

DOUG MOENCH WRITER | JIM APARO ART/LETTERS | ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST | SCOTT PETERSON ASST. EDITOR | DENNIS O'NEIL EDITOR | BOB KANE CREATOR

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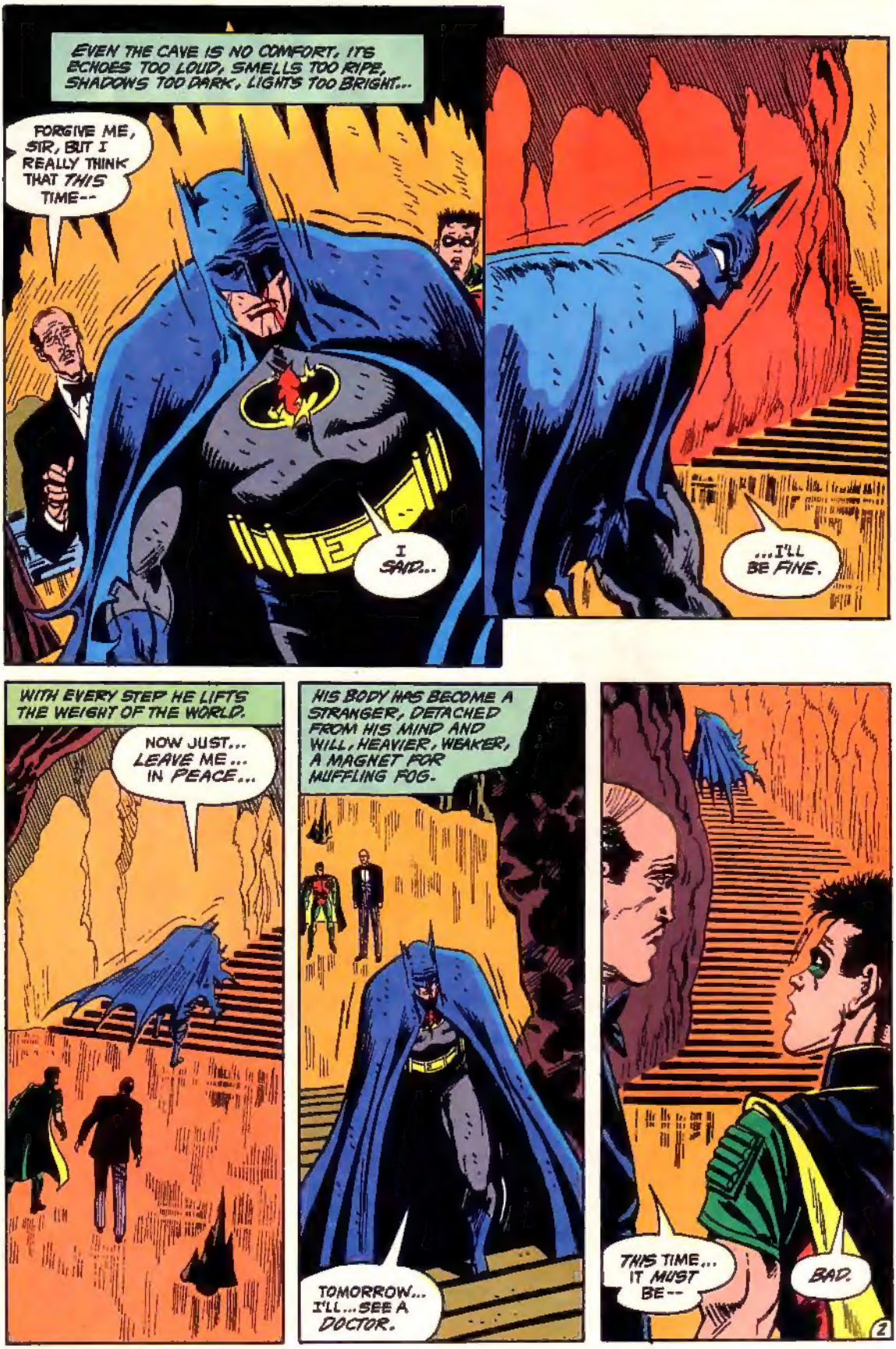
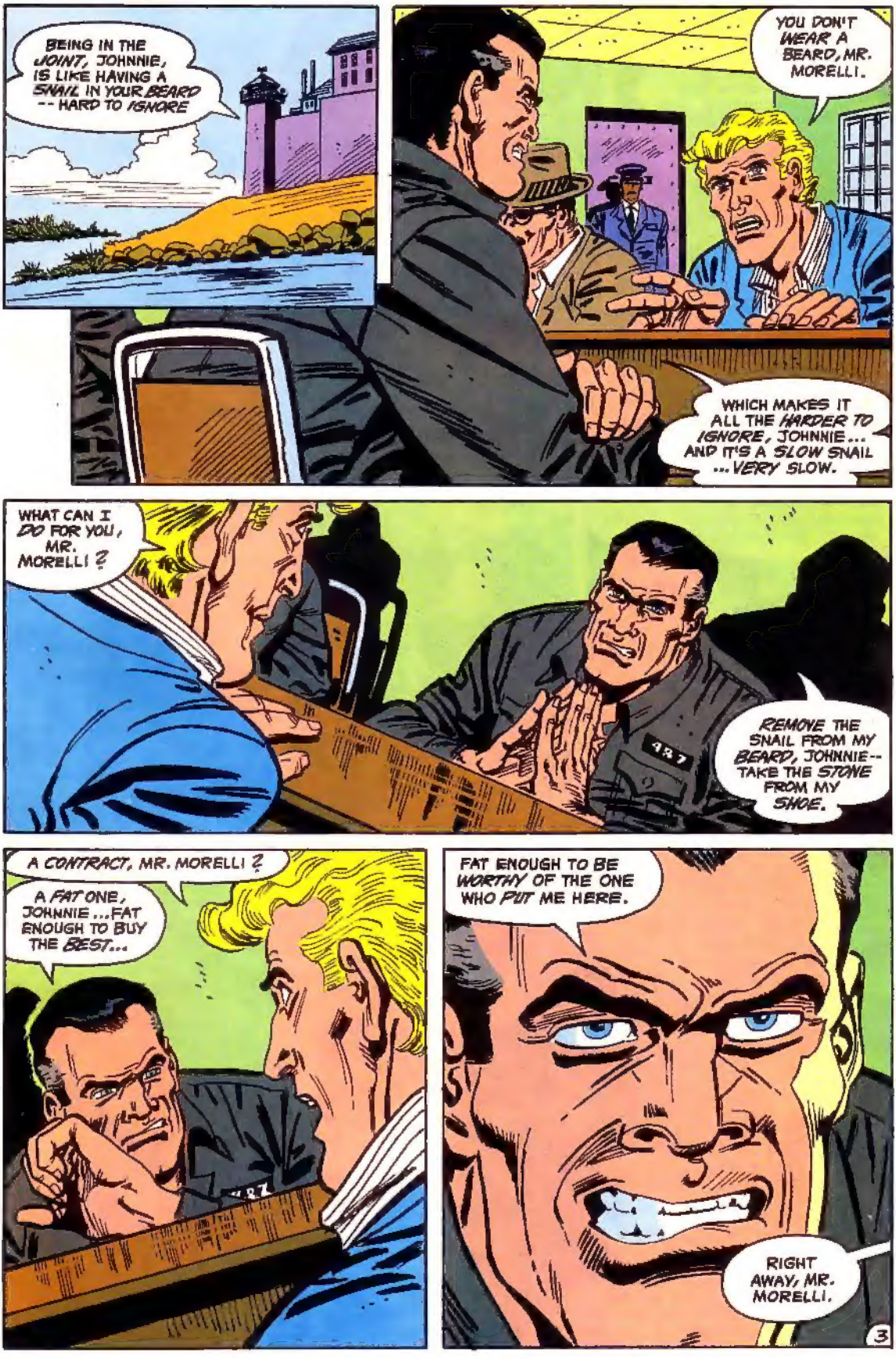
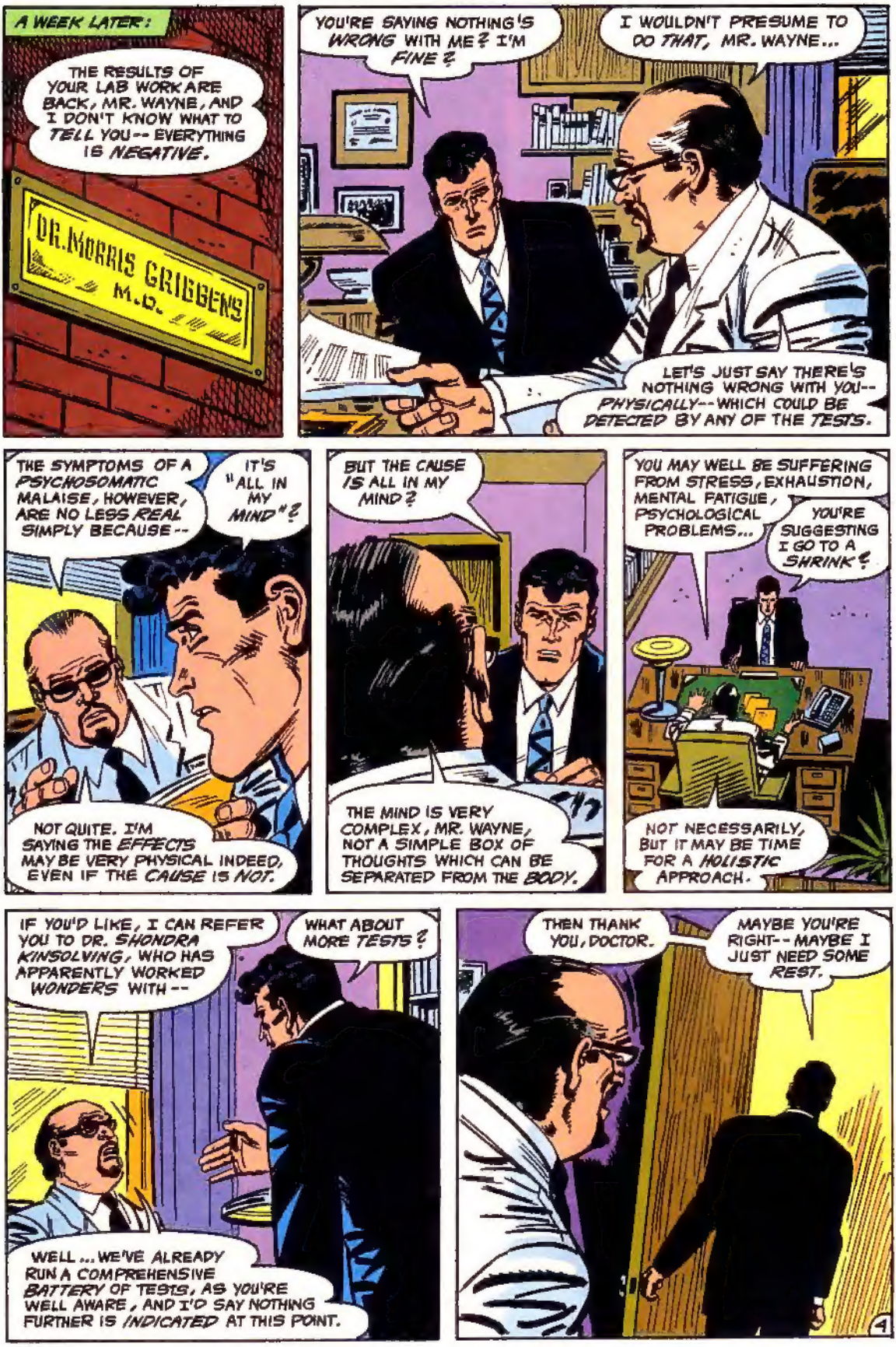
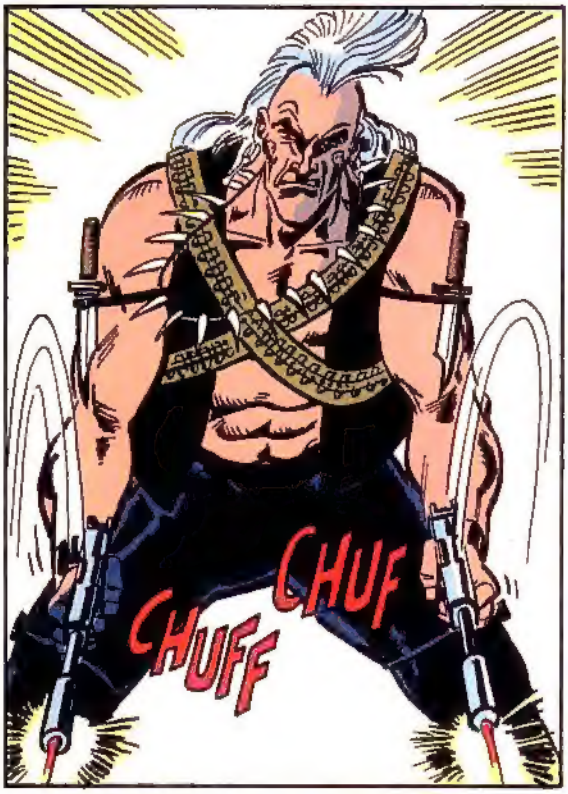

EVEN THE CAVE IS NO COMFORT, ITS ECHOES TOO LOUD, SMELLS TOO RIPE, SHADOWS TOO DARK, LIGHTS TOO BRIGHT...
FORGIVE ME, SIR, BUT I REALLY THINK THAT THIS TIME--
I SAID...
...I'LL BE FINE.
WITH EVERY STEP HE LIFTS THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD.
NOW JUST... LEAVE ME... IN PEACE...
HIS BODY HAS BECOME A STRANGER, DETACHED FROM HIS MIND AND WILL, HEAVIER, WEAKER, A MAGNET FOR MUFFLING FOG.
TOMORROW... I'LL... SEE A DOCTOR.
THIS TIME... IT MUST BE--
BAD.
2


BEING IN THE JOINT, JOHNNIE, IS LIKE HAVING A SNAIL IN YOUR BEARD -- HARD TO IGNORE
YOU DON'T WEAR A BEARD, MR. MORELLI.
WHICH MAKES IT ALL THE HARDER TO IGNORE, JOHNNIE... AND IT'S A SLOW SNAIL ...VERY SLOW.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MR. MORELLI?
REMOVE THE SNAIL FROM MY BEARD, JOHNNIE-- TAKE THE STONE FROM MY SHOE.
A CONTRACT, MR. MORELLI?
A FAT ONE, JOHNNIE ...FAT ENOUGH TO BUY THE BEST...
FAT ENOUGH TO BE WORTHY OF THE ONE WHO PUT ME HERE.
RIGHT AWAY, MR. MORELLI.
3


A WEEK LATER:
THE RESULTS OF YOUR LAB WORK ARE BACK, MR. WAYNE, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL YOU -- EVERYTHING IS NEGATIVE.
DR. MORRIS GRIBBENS M.D.
YOU'RE SAYING NOTHING'S WRONG WITH ME? I'M FINE?
I WOULDN'T PRESUME TO DO THAT, MR. WAYNE...
LET'S JUST SAY THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU -- PHYSICALLY -- WHICH COULD BE DETECTED BY ANY OF THE TESTS.
THE SYMPTOMS OF A PSYCHOSOMATIC MALAISE, HOWEVER, ARE NO LESS REAL SIMPLY BECAUSE --
IT'S "ALL IN MY MIND"?
NOT QUITE. I'M SAYING THE EFFECTS MAY BE VERY PHYSICAL INDEED, EVEN IF THE CAUSE IS NOT.
BUT THE CAUSE IS ALL IN MY MIND?
THE MIND IS VERY COMPLEX, MR. WAYNE, NOT A SIMPLE BOX OF THOUGHTS WHICH CAN BE SEPARATED FROM THE BODY.
YOU MAY WELL BE SUFFERING FROM STRESS, EXHAUSTION, MENTAL FATIGUE, PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS...
YOU'RE SUGGESTING I GO TO A SHRINK?
NOT NECESSARILY, BUT IT MAY BE TIME FOR A HOLISTIC APPROACH.
IF YOU'D LIKE, I CAN REFER YOU TO DR. SHONDRA KINSOLVING, WHO HAS APPARENTLY WORKED WONDERS WITH --
WHAT ABOUT MORE TESTS?
WELL... WE'VE ALREADY RUN A COMPREHENSIVE BATTERY OF TESTS, AS YOU'RE WELL AWARE, AND I'D SAY NOTHING FURTHER IS INDICATED AT THIS POINT.
THEN THANK YOU, DOCTOR.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT -- MAYBE I JUST NEED SOME REST.
4

YOU SAY HE'S THE BEST, JOHNNIE, BUT WHO IS THIS GUY?
A FREAK WITH ICEWATER IN HIS LOUSY VEINS--A DEAD GUY, Y'KNOW? --AND DEAD GUYS NEVER MIND WACKIN' SOMEONE ELSE.
OTHER'N BEIN' DEAD, WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT HIM?
ALWAYS HEAD SHOTS, TWO OF 'EM, SECOND SHOT IS JUST HIS TRADEMARK SINCE HE NEVER MISSES THE FIRST--AND HE'S NEVER BEEN CAUGHT.
NO REAL NAME... LIKE A FREAKIN' GHOST, I'M TELLIN' YA... CALLS HIMSELF HEADHUNTER.
YEAH? WELL, I DON'T LIKE IT UP HERE, JOHNNIE--TOO EXPOSED...
AFRAID I'LL HIT YOU--
--AND JUST RUN WITH THE DOWN-PAYMENT?
BAMP
5


CHUF
CHUFF

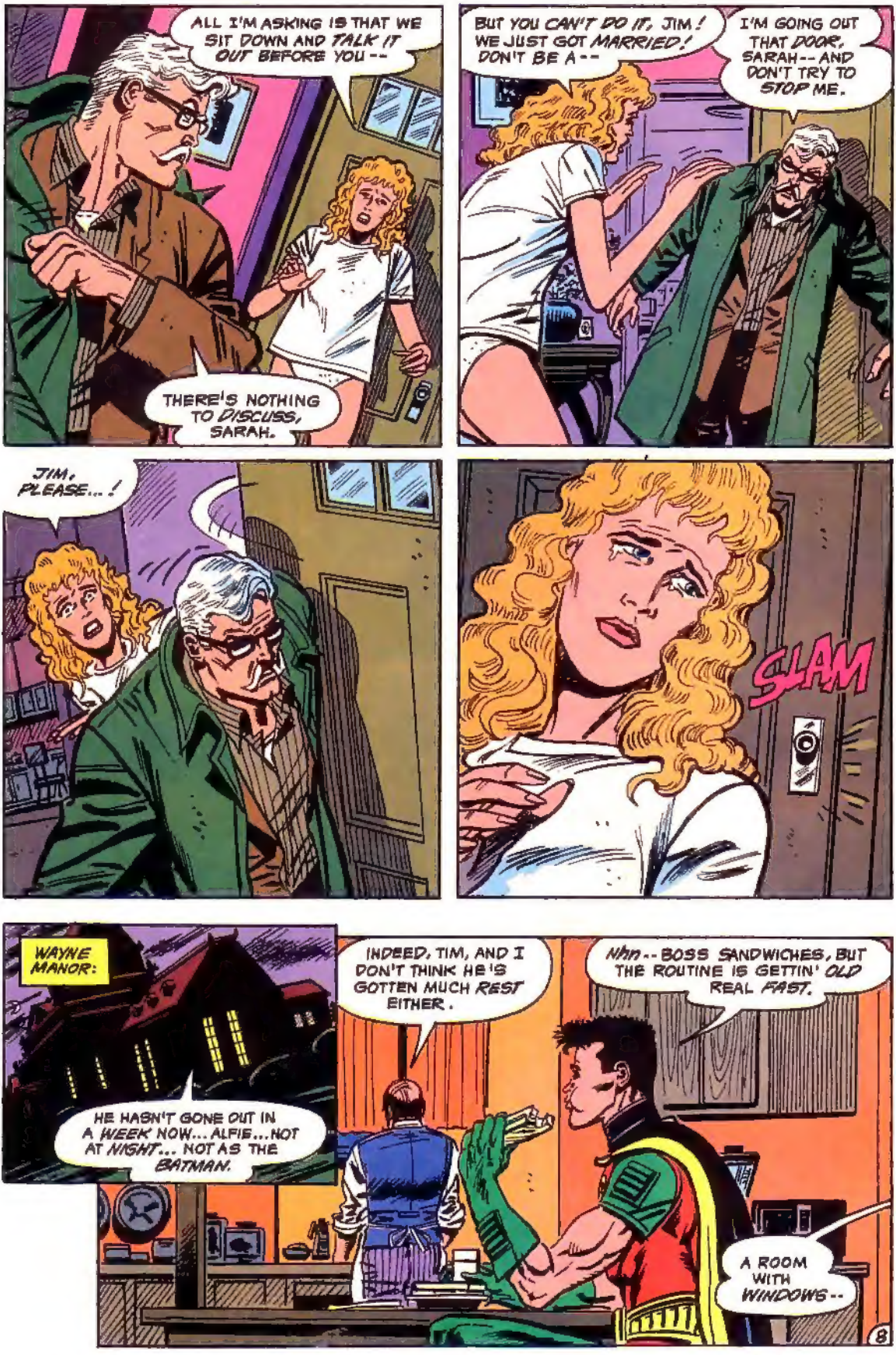
SPANG
BZAI

RELAX, GREASEBALLS.
YOU'RE HIRING AN ASSASSIN OF HONOR... WHO PREFERS PAYMENT IN FULL.

FIFTY THOU-- THE REST ON EXECUTION.
MUST BE A BIG TARGET, GREASEBALL.

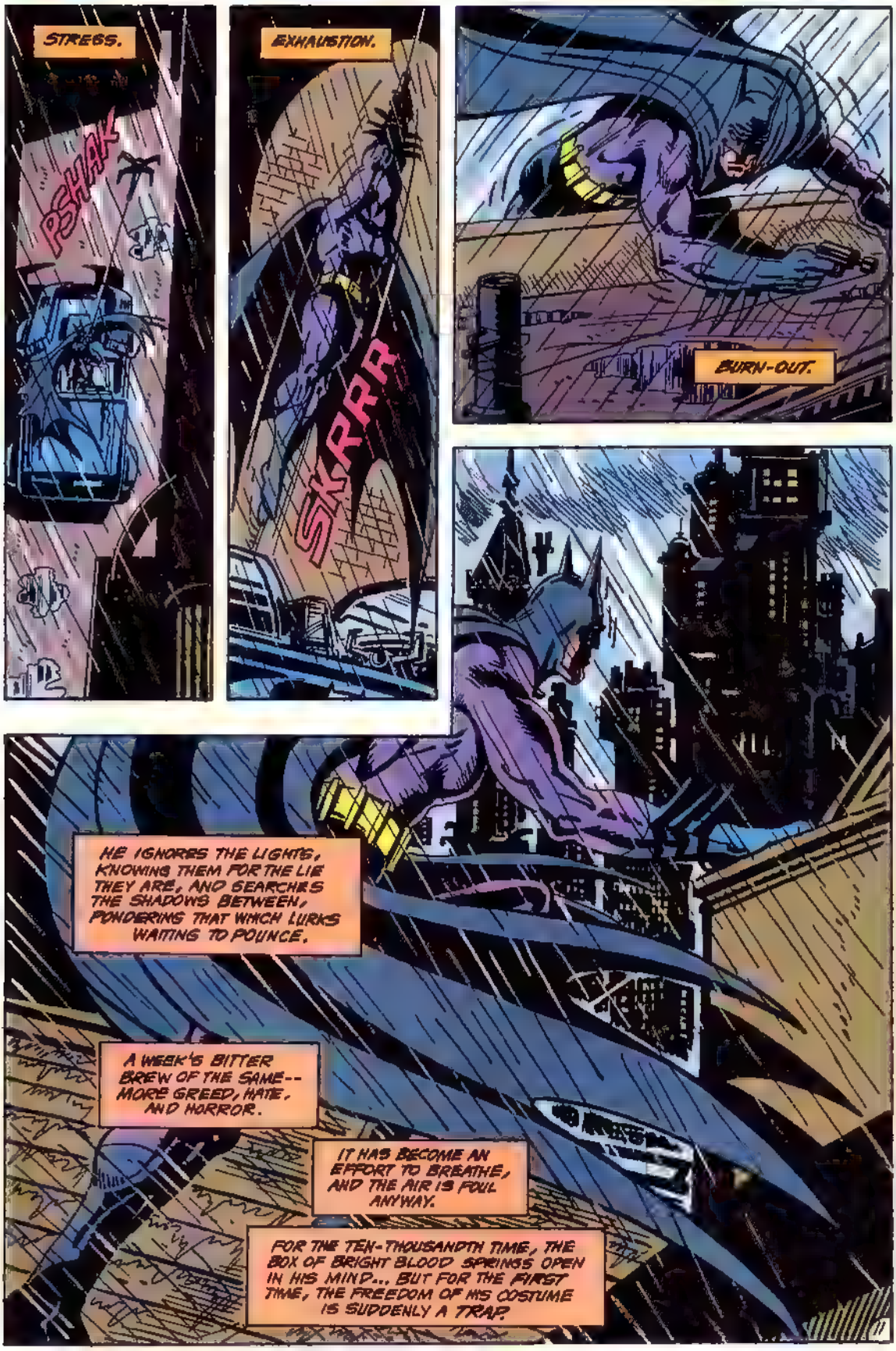
YOU GOT IT, FREAK.
THE BIGGEST IN GOTHAM.
6

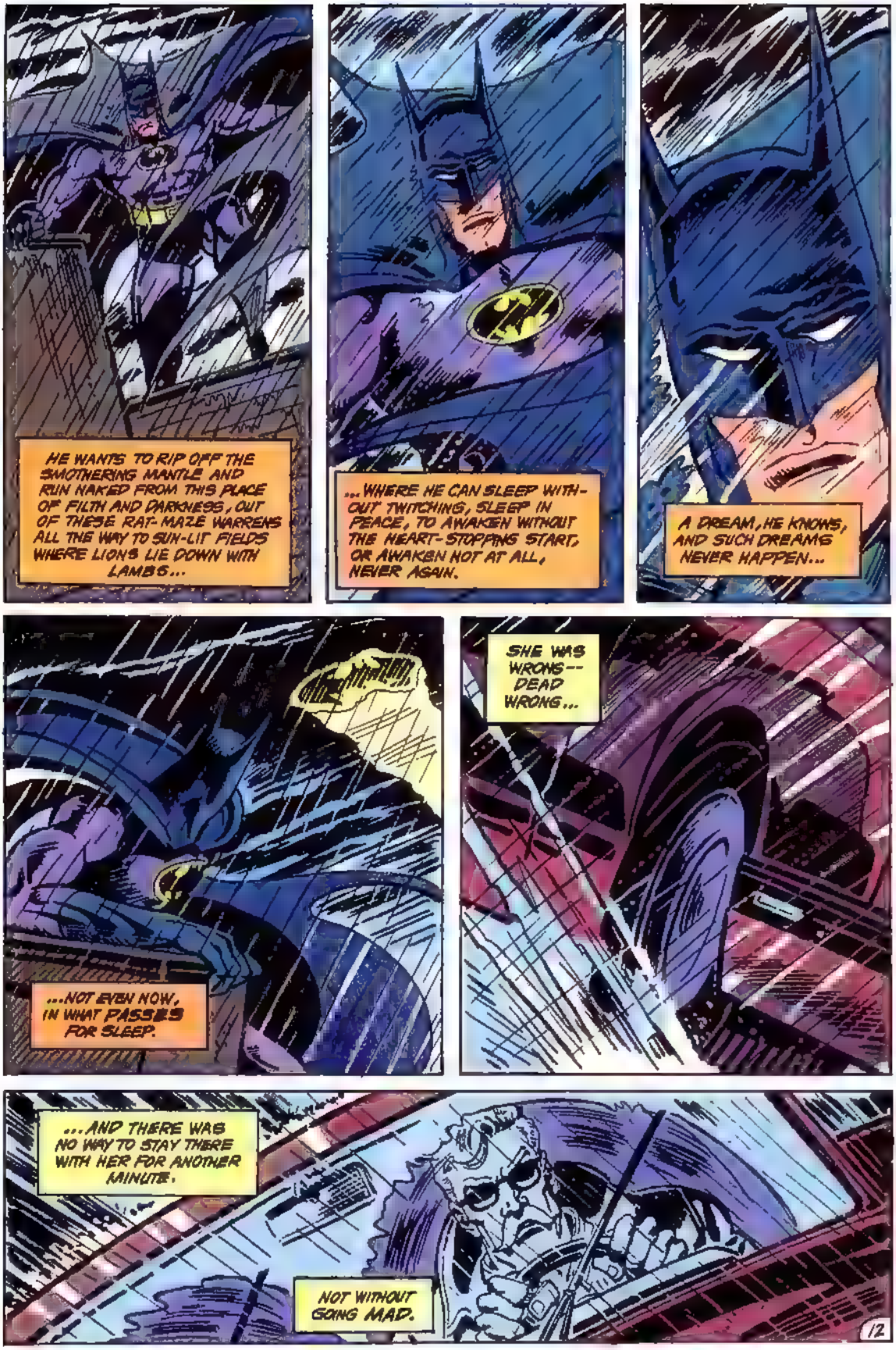
WAYNE ENTERPRISES:
--ARSON SCARE SEEMS TO HAVE ABATED, BRUCE, AND THE TENANTS WHO THREATENED TO LEAVE OUR BUILDINGS HAVE ALL CHANGED THEIR MINDS...
THE OFFICES WHICH WERE ACTUALLY VACATED?
WE CLOSE A NEW LEASE ON THE LAST OF THEM TOMORROW.
GOOD. WE CAN'T... BURN OUT... NOW.
BRUCE, ARE YOU...FEELING ALL RIGHT?
WE BOTH WENT THROUGH BLACK MASK'S HELL, LUCIUS, AND WE BOTH SURVIVED...
... BUT MAYBE YOU'RE... HANDLING IT BETTER.
BRUCE, WHAT YOU DID TOOK TRUE COURAGE-- GOING IN THERE ALONE TO GET ME OUT...
AFTER SOMETHING LIKE THAT--
I MAY BE ASKING YOU TO ASSUME EVEN MORE RESPONSIBILITY FROM NOW ON, LUCIUS...MORE OF THE ACTUAL DECISION-MAKING FOR WAYNE ENTERPRISES.
YOUR SALARY--
IS ALREADY GENEROUS, BRUCE.
YOU JUST GET SOME REST.
7

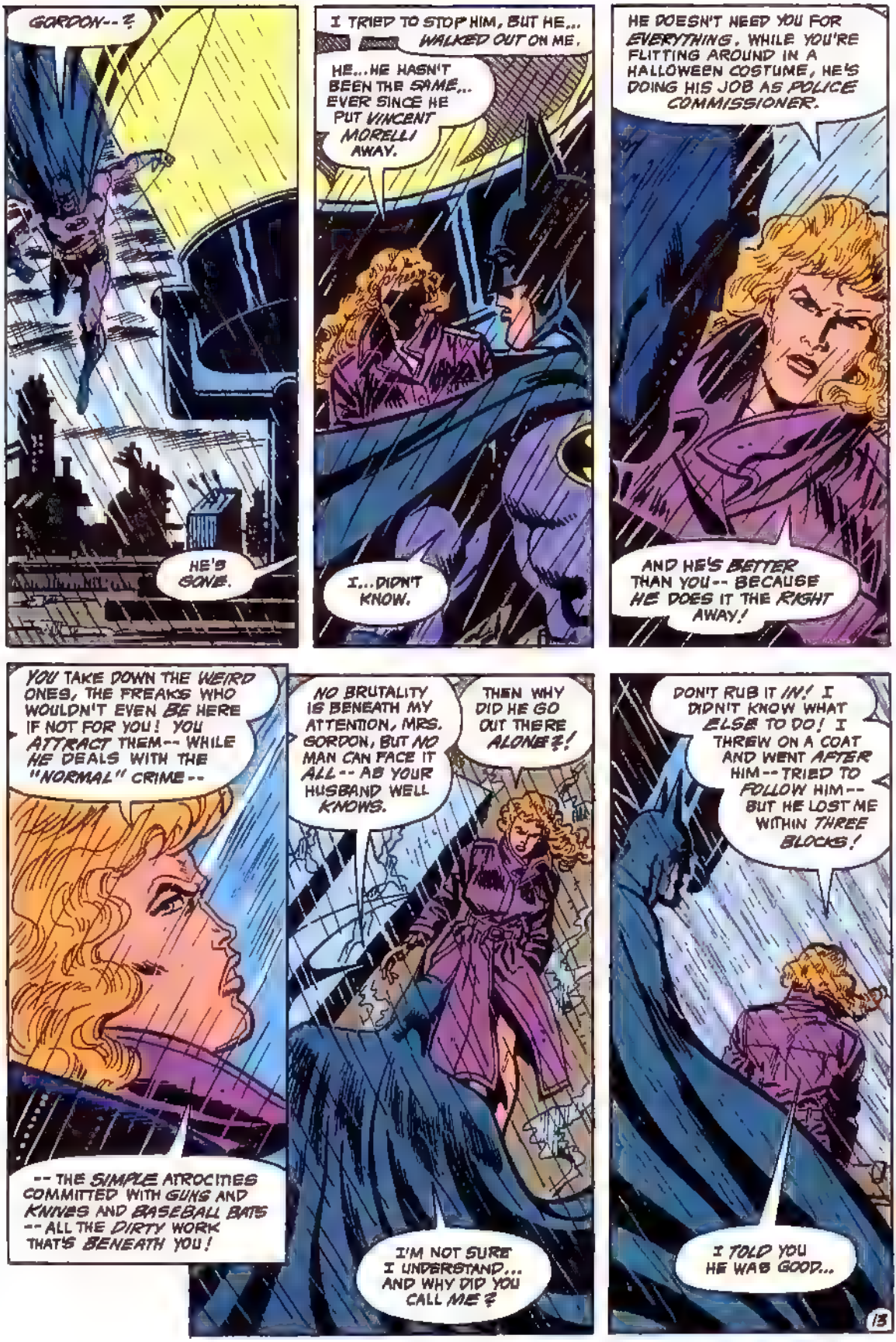

ALL I'M ASKING IS THAT WE SIT DOWN AND TALK IT OUT BEFORE YOU --
THERE'S NOTHING TO DISCUSS, SARAH.
BUT YOU CAN'T DO IT, JIM! WE JUST GOT MARRIED! DON'T BE A --
I'M GOING OUT THAT DOOR, SARAH -- AND DON'T TRY TO STOP ME.
JIM, PLEASE...!
SLAM
WAYNE MANOR:
HE HASN'T GONE OUT IN A WEEK NOW... ALFIE... NOT AT NIGHT... NOT AS THE BATMAN.
INDEED, TIM, AND I DON'T THINK HE'S GOTTEN MUCH REST EITHER.
Nhn -- BOSS SANDWICHES, BUT THE ROUTINE IS GETTIN' OLD REAL FAST.
A ROOM WITH WINDOWS --
8

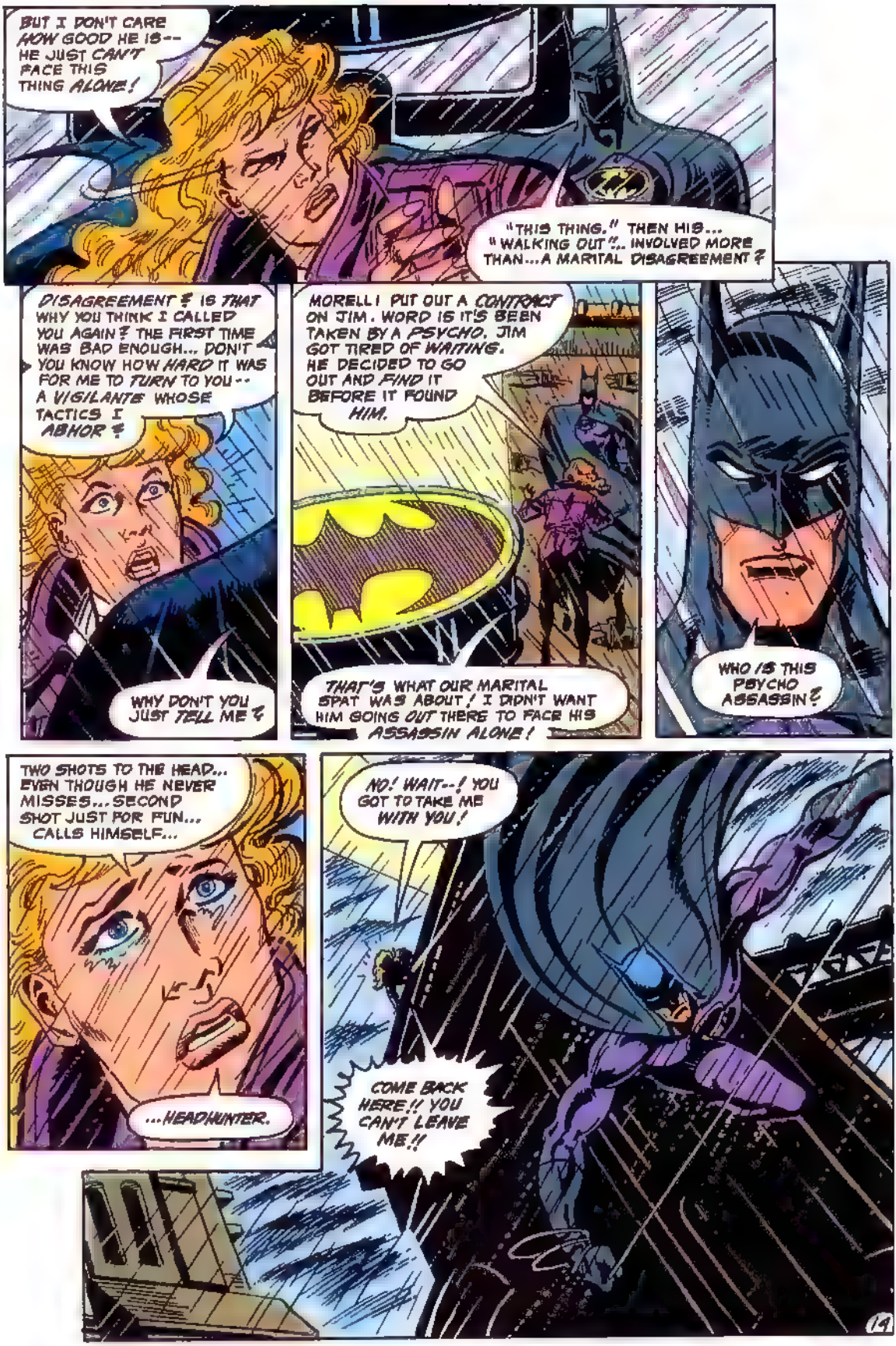
--AND YOU'RE WEARING THAT.
OOOPS.
YOU KNOW THE RULES.
YEAH, BUT WE DID MAKE SURE THE CURTAINS WERE DRAWN AND--
ALFRED, YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER.
YES, SIR.
DID YOU, AH, SEE THE DOCTOR AGAIN?
YES.
I'M FINE.
WELL, IF HE'S GOING OUT TONIGHT, I GUESS IT'S GONNA BE SOLO.
I HATE THESE TWO'S-A-CROWD MOODS OF HIS.
HE'S ALWAYS ALONE, TIMOTHY, EVEN IN A CROWD.
YEAH, BUT--
I'M GETTING WORRIED NOW...
VERY WORRIED.

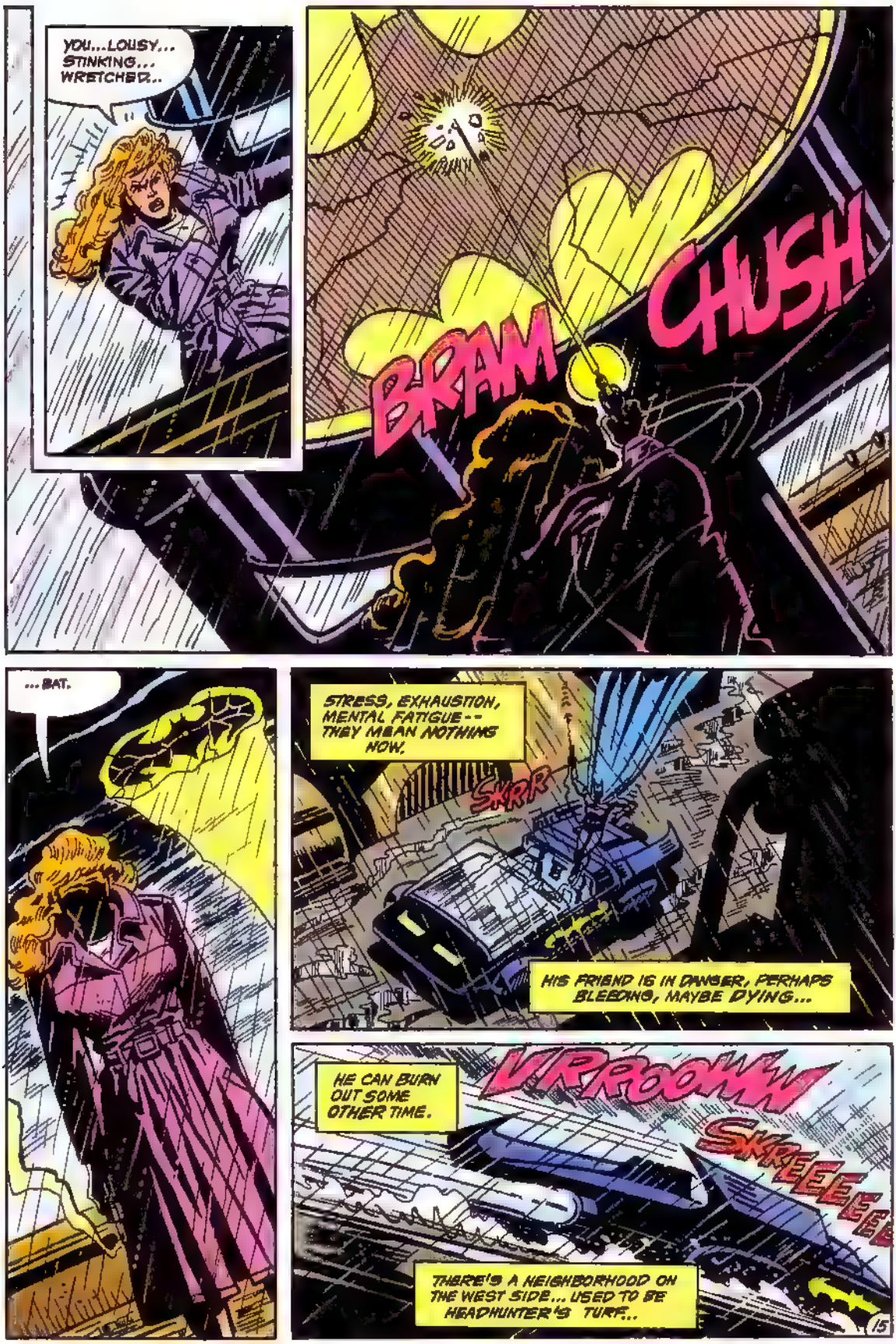
THE RAIN IS A DISPIRITING DRIZZLE THROUGH WHICH HE HAS CRUISED THE GREASY STREETS FOR HOURS.
Nitro's on Tap
MAYBE THIS IS WHERE HE'LL FIND WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR.
HE SCANS THE PLACE THROUGH SMOKE AND DIM LIGHT.
NOTHING, HE DECIDES, FOR HIM HERE.
Nitro's
THIS WAS THE FIRST POSSIBILITY. NOW HE'LL GO TO THE SECOND... ON THE WEST SIDE...
SO HE RETURNS TO THE SLICK STREETS, WHEELS SPINNING WHEN HE PUMPS THE GAS.
on Tap
10


STRESS.
PSHAK
EXHAUSTION.
SKRRR
BURN-OUT.
HE IGNORES THE LIGHTS, KNOWING THEM FOR THE LIE THEY ARE, AND SEARCHES THE SHADOWS BETWEEN, PONDERING THAT WHICH LURKS WAITING TO POUNCE.
A WEEK'S BITTER BREW OF THE SAME-- MORE GREED, HATE, AND HORROR.
IT HAS BECOME AN EFFORT TO BREATHE, AND THE AIR IS FOUL ANYWAY.
FOR THE TEN-THOUSANDTH TIME, THE BOX OF BRIGHT BLOOD SPRINGS OPEN IN HIS MIND... BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE FREEDOM OF HIS COSTUME IS SUDDENLY A TRAP.

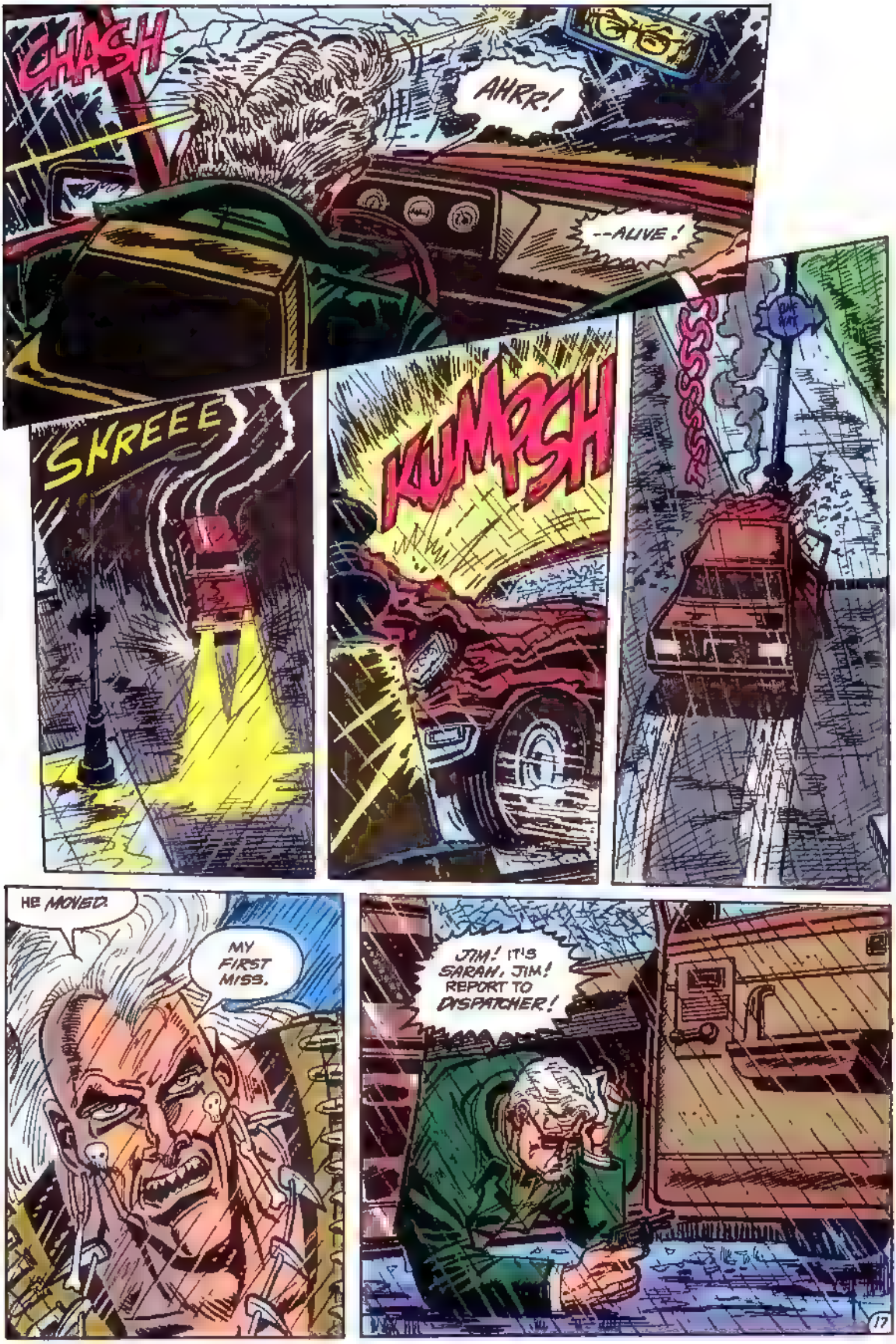

HE WANTS TO RIP OFF THE SMOTHERING MANTLE AND RUN NAKED FROM THIS PLACE OF FILTH AND DARKNESS, OUT OF THESE RAT-MAZE WARRENS ALL THE WAY TO SUN-LIT FIELDS WHERE LIONS LIE DOWN WITH LAMBS...
...WHERE HE CAN SLEEP WITHOUT TWITCHING, SLEEP IN PEACE, TO AWAKEN WITHOUT THE HEART-STOPPING START, OR AWAKEN NOT AT ALL, NEVER AGAIN.
A DREAM, HE KNOWS, AND SUCH DREAMS NEVER HAPPEN...
...NOT EVEN NOW, IN WHAT PASSES FOR SLEEP.
SHE WAS WRONG-- DEAD WRONG...
...AND THERE WAS NO WAY TO STAY THERE WITH HER FOR ANOTHER MINUTE.
NOT WITHOUT GOING MAD.
12


GORDON--?
HE'S GONE.
I TRIED TO STOP HIM, BUT HE... WALKED OUT ON ME.
HE...HE HASN'T BEEN THE SAME... EVER SINCE HE PUT VINCENT MORELLI AWAY.
I...DIDN'T KNOW.
HE DOESN'T NEED YOU FOR EVERYTHING. WHILE YOU'RE FLITTING AROUND IN A HALLOWEEN COSTUME, HE'S DOING HIS JOB AS POLICE COMMISSIONER.
AND HE'S BETTER THAN YOU-- BECAUSE HE DOES IT THE RIGHT AWAY!
YOU TAKE DOWN THE WEIRD ONES, THE FREAKS WHO WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE IF NOT FOR YOU! YOU ATTRACT THEM-- WHILE HE DEALS WITH THE "NORMAL" CRIME--
-- THE SIMPLE ATROCITIES COMMITTED WITH GUNS AND KNIVES AND BASEBALL BATS -- ALL THE DIRTY WORK THAT'S BENEATH YOU!
NO BRUTALITY IS BENEATH MY ATTENTION, MRS. GORDON, BUT NO MAN CAN FACE IT ALL -- AS YOUR HUSBAND WELL KNOWS.
THEN WHY DID HE GO OUT THERE ALONE?!
I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND... AND WHY DID YOU CALL ME?
DON'T RUB IT IN! I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO! I THREW ON A COAT AND WENT AFTER HIM -- TRIED TO FOLLOW HIM-- BUT HE LOST ME WITHIN THREE BLOCKS!
I TOLD YOU HE WAS GOOD...
13

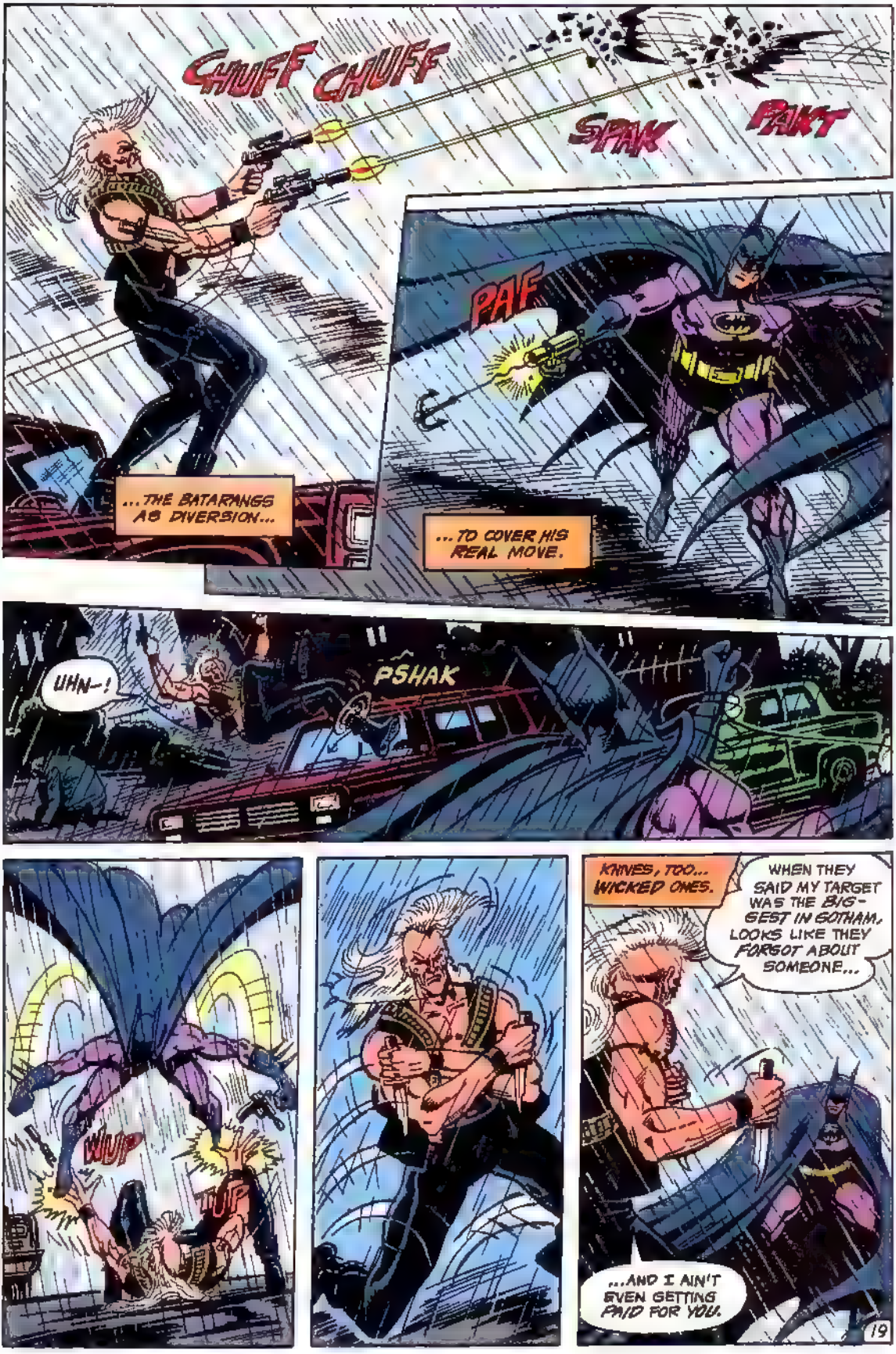

BUT I DON'T CARE HOW GOOD HE IS-- HE JUST CAN'T FACE THIS THING ALONE!
"THIS THING." THEN HIS... "WALKING OUT".. INVOLVED MORE THAN...A MARITAL DISAGREEMENT?
DISAGREEMENT? IS THAT WHY YOU THINK I CALLED YOU AGAIN? THE FIRST TIME WAS BAD ENOUGH... DON'T YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT WAS FOR ME TO TURN TO YOU-- A VIGILANTE WHOSE TACTICS I ABHOR?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST TELL ME?
MORELLI PUT OUT A CONTRACT ON JIM. WORD IS IT'S BEEN TAKEN BY A PSYCHO. JIM GOT TIRED OF WAITING. HE DECIDED TO GO OUT AND FIND IT BEFORE IT FOUND HIM.
THAT'S WHAT OUR MARITAL SPAT WAS ABOUT! I DIDN'T WANT HIM GOING OUT THERE TO FACE HIS ASSASSIN ALONE!
WHO IS THIS PSYCHO ASSASSIN?
TWO SHOTS TO THE HEAD... EVEN THOUGH HE NEVER MISSES...SECOND SHOT JUST FOR FUN... CALLS HIMSELF...
...HEADHUNTER.
NO! WAIT--! YOU GOT TO TAKE ME WITH YOU!
COME BACK HERE!! YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME!!

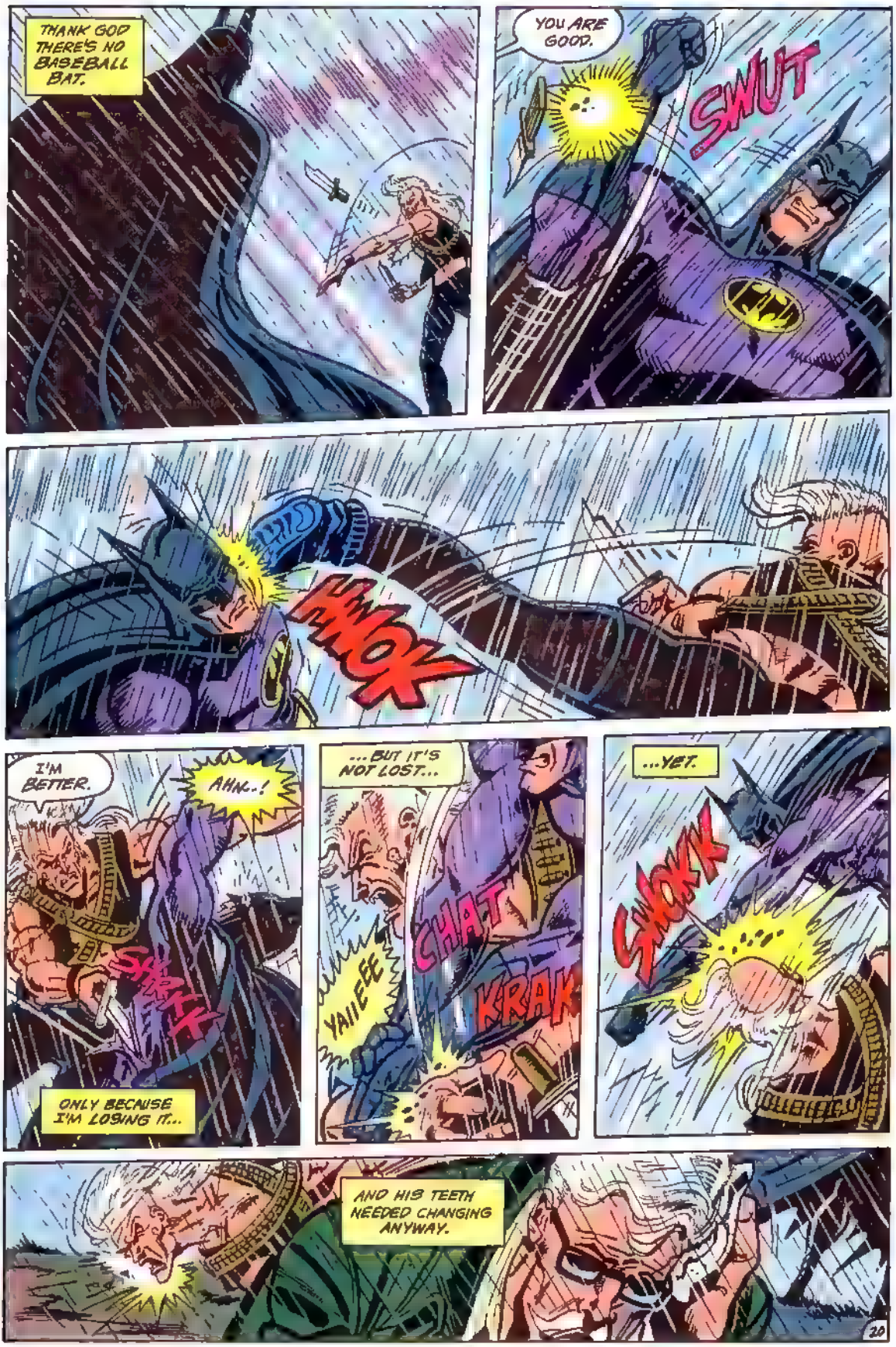

YOU...LOUSY... STINKING... WRETCHED...
BRAM
CHUSH
...BAT.
STRESS, EXHAUSTION, MENTAL FATIGUE -- THEY MEAN NOTHING NOW.
SKRR
HIS FRIEND IS IN DANGER, PERHAPS BLEEDING, MAYBE DYING...
HE CAN BURN OUT SOME OTHER TIME.
VRROOMM
SKREEEEEE
THERE'S A NEIGHBORHOOD ON THE WEST SIDE... USED TO BE HEADHUNTER'S TURF...

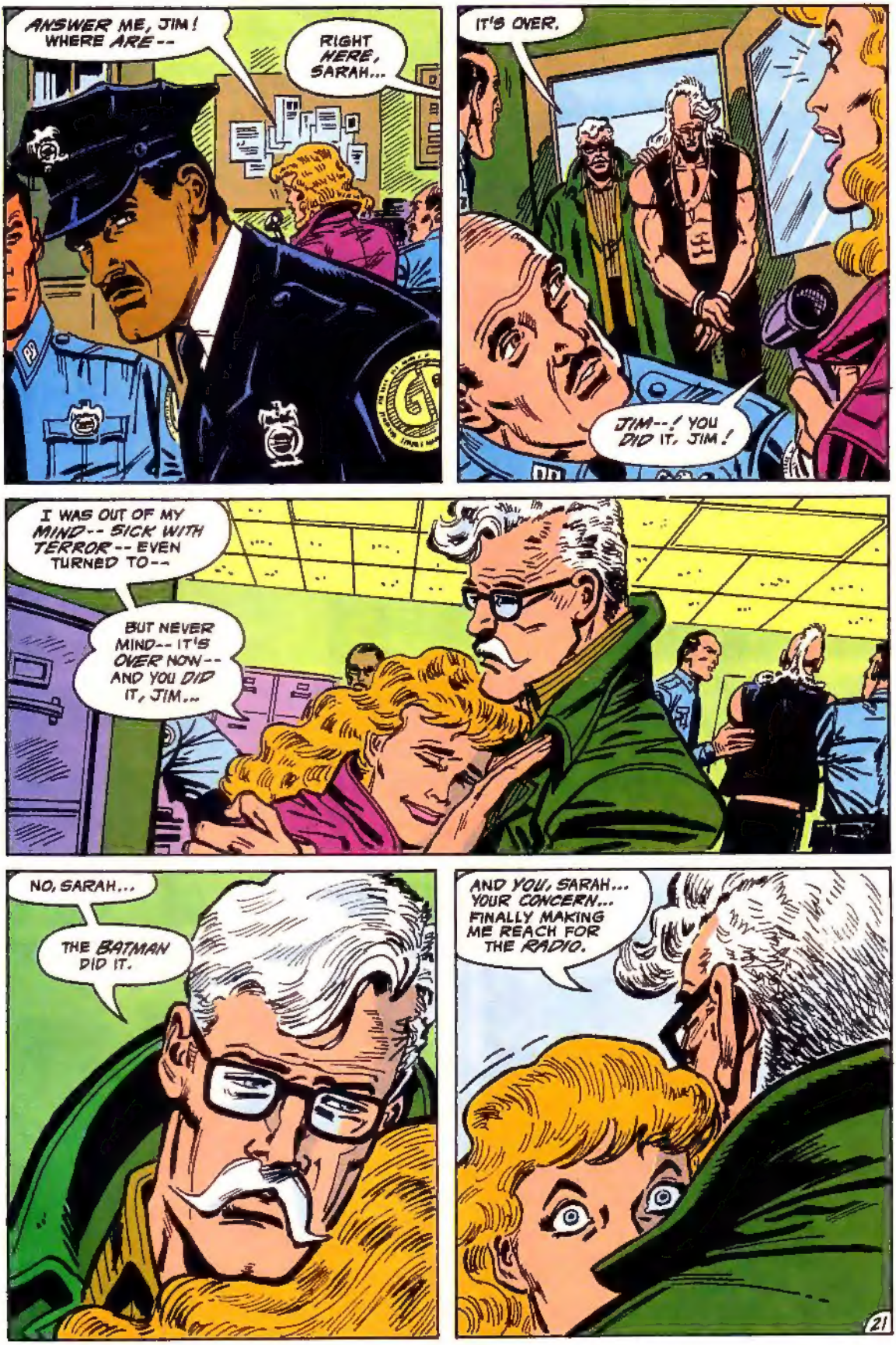
JIM! ANSWER ME, JIM!
REPORT TO DISPATCHER!
WHY CAN'T SHE UNDERSTAND? THERE ARE BULLETS WAITING FOR HIM...
...BULLETS HE'S GOT TO FIND.
PLEASE, JIM--! IT'S SARAH...
ACKNOWLEDGE!
AND THAT CAR SEEMED TO BE FOLLOWING HIM-- BEFORE ABRUPTLY PEELING OFF TO SPEED DOWN THIS SIDE STREET...
PROBABLY NOTHING, BUT...
PLEASE ANSWER ME, JIM! YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME WHERE YOU ARE...
...BUT AT LEAST LET ME KNOW YOU'RE STILL--
CHUFF
16

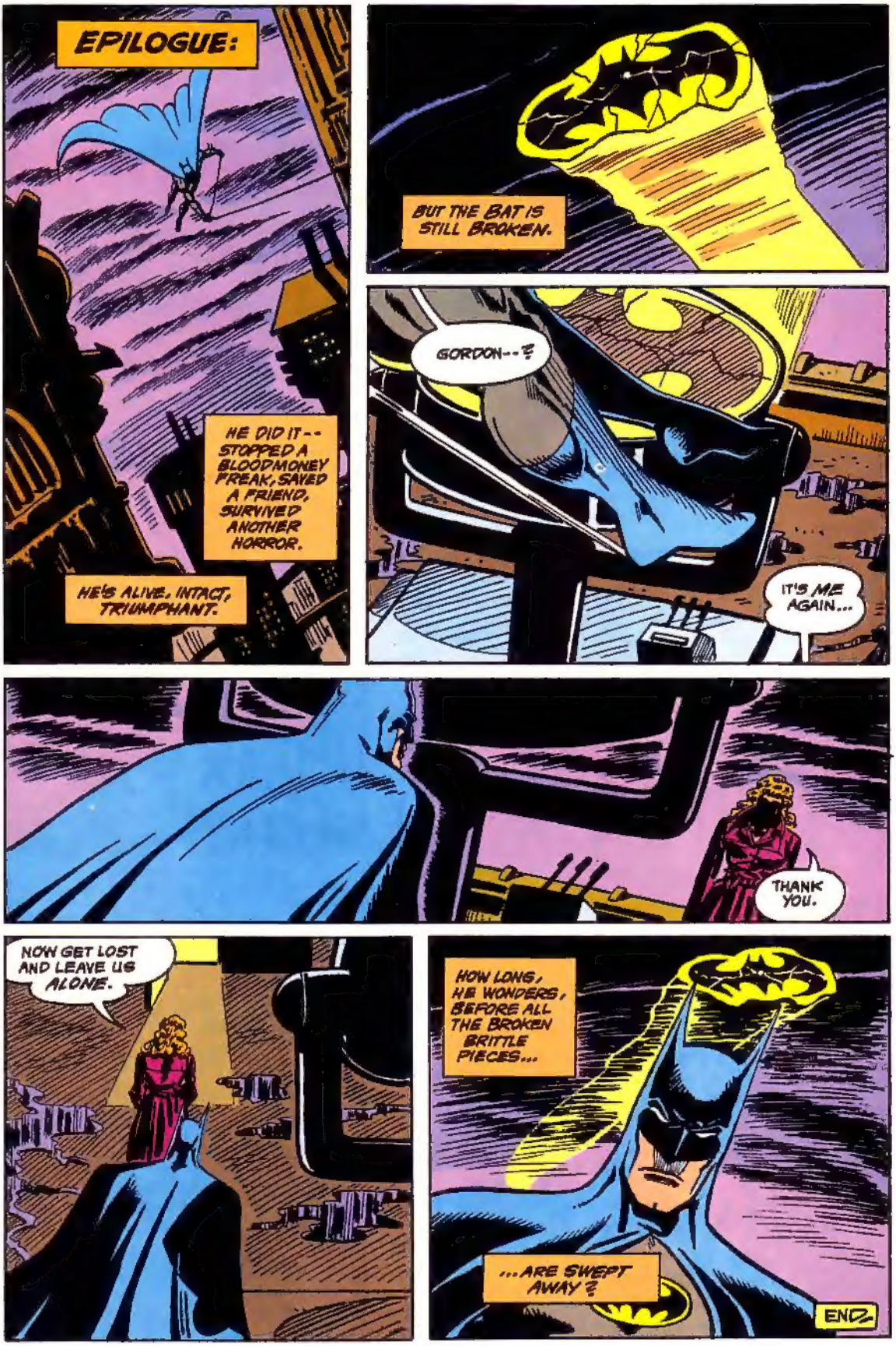

CHASH
AHRR!
--ALIVE!
SKREEE
KUMPSH
SSSSS
HE MOVED.
MY FIRST MISS.
JIM! IT'S SARAH, JIM! REPORT TO DISPATCHER!
17

THE SOUND OF THE CRASH--IT WAS GORDON'S CAR...
HIS FRIEND'S CAR.
PSHAK
CHAKT
YOU'RE MY FIRST MISS, COMMISSIONER GORDON...
...THE FIRST TO MAKE MY SECOND SHOT MEANINGFUL.
CHUFF
BEOW
AND NOW IT'LL HAVE TO BE MY THIRD.
DROP THE GUNS--NOW.
WORDS DON'T ALWAYS WORK--AND HE FEELS THE NEED FOR AN EDGE...


CHUFF CHUFF
SPAK
PAKT
...THE BATARANGS AS DIVERSION...
PAF
...TO COVER HIS REAL MOVE.
UHN-!
PSHAK
WUP
WUP
KNIVES, TOO... WICKED ONES.
WHEN THEY SAID MY TARGET WAS THE BIGGEST IN GOTHAM, LOOKS LIKE THEY FORGOT ABOUT SOMEONE...
...AND I AIN'T EVEN GETTING PAID FOR YOU.
19


THANK GOD THERE'S NO BASEBALL BAT.
YOU ARE GOOD.
SWUT
KWOK
I'M BETTER.
AHN..!
SKRIK
ONLY BECAUSE I'M LOSING IT...
...BUT IT'S NOT LOST...
YAIIEEE
CHAT
KRAK
...YET.
SWOKK
AND HIS TEETH NEEDED CHANGING ANYWAY.


ANSWER ME, JIM! WHERE ARE--
RIGHT HERE, SARAH...
IT'S OVER.
JIM--! YOU DID IT, JIM!
I WAS OUT OF MY MIND-- SICK WITH TERROR-- EVEN TURNED TO--
BUT NEVER MIND-- IT'S OVER NOW-- AND YOU DID IT, JIM...
NO, SARAH...
THE BATMAN DID IT.
AND YOU, SARAH... YOUR CONCERN... FINALLY MAKING ME REACH FOR THE RADIO.


EPILOGUE:
HE DID IT -- STOPPED A BLOODMONEY FREAK, SAVED A FRIEND, SURVIVED ANOTHER HORROR.
HE'S ALIVE, INTACT, TRIUMPHANT.
BUT THE BAT IS STILL BROKEN.
GORDON--?
IT'S ME AGAIN...
THANK YOU.
NOW GET LOST AND LEAVE US ALONE.
HOW LONG, HE WONDERS, BEFORE ALL THE BROKEN BRITTLE PIECES...
...ARE SWEPT AWAY?
END

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Dear Bat-Signals,
Re: BATMAN #479
Pagan guest appearances!
Pagan miniseries!
Pagan ongoing series!
Pagan posters!
Pagan T-shirts!
Pagan action figures!
Pagan the motion picture!
Pagan breakfast cereal!
PAGAN! PAGAN! PAGAN!

Dan E. Raga
Whitesboro, New York

Don't be ridiculous, Dan. No comic book character's ever going to get that kind of treatment.

Dear Denny,

It's always a pleasure to see Tom Mandrake's art, but especially so when he draws Batman. Tom's flair with shadows and night scenes is tailor-made for the Dark Knight, and BATMAN #479 was no exception. Batman's shadow cast against the building on page 4 and the violent car crash in the night on page 5 are two examples of this talent, and they were two of my favorite scenes in this issue besides. If it were up to me, Tom could fill in on a Batman book every month.

Jim Kelly
Valley Stream, New York

Dear Bat-Editors,

In regard to BATMAN #479, page 15, panel 5, Batman deduces the gender of the assailant as female because of footprints, shown clearly in the panel as those that are left behind by high-heeled shoes. In every other panel where we can see Pagan's feet, she is wearing flats (as any common-sense-holding, costumed, action-type person, good or bad, would). Have I de- "feet"-ed your art editors? Will you make them work harder to "toe" the line? Even though this was the "sole" error I found in what was otherwise an enjoyable story, I think this find makes me a "shoe-in" for a Baldy award.

Howard L. Price
Fairview Heights, Illinois

A Baldy? Wrong book, Howard, you heel. Somebody give that guy the boot. A Baldy, my foot...

And now some comments on BATMAN #480, "To the Father I Never Knew..."

Dear Denny,

"To the Father I Never Knew..." was one of the best Batman and Robin stories since BATMAN #416. Batman and Robin talking on the job was a first but should not be a last. Lately Batman has been developing a family and it's good for him to have people to talk to. Please don't have a 900 number with Tim. He is the best Robin yet—just look at what he did to the Y-Dogs that messed up his mom's grave.

All in all, it was a great comic with a happy ending. Tim living next to Bruce is a new experience, and it should work out well. You guys are doing great. Keep up the good work.

Scott Jensen
Coram, New York

Will you folks stop worrying about the 900-number? It's not coming back! Never! Never ever! Never ever ever ever ever! Okay? Now then—thanks for writing, Scott.

Dear Denny and Crew,

At the end of BATMAN #480 you said, "I hope you enjoyed the issue." Hope I enjoyed it? I loved it! And who couldn't? With great editing, great cover, great art and a great storyline...I've been getting BATMAN since '88 and this is a classic. And I'm glad you brought Tim back. The boy has a good career ahead of him. Keep up the totally excellent work!

Grant McCallum
somewhere

If you liked the cover, Grant, you'll be happy to hear that the artist, Mr. Michael Netzer, penciller of BATMAN/GREEN ARROW: THE POISON TOMORROW, is our new artist over on DETECTIVE. And if that's not a good reason to buy an already fantastic title, heck, I just don't know what is.

Dear Batman Crew,

In regard to BATMAN #480: bravo!

This issue was touching (Tim and his father's relationship), a bit shocking (the corruption in Drake Med, Inc.), applaudable (Tim leaving Bruce to take care of his father), and entertaining all the way through! Sorry to see this was Alan Grant's last issue, but I'm glad he went out with such a great story.

Bring on Doug Moench...

Mike Farmer
Alpharetta, Georgia

Brought...

Dear Bat-People,

Just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed "To the Father I Never Knew..." It was looking like Tim was to follow in Dick's and Jason's steps and be an orphan, but keeping his father alive is certainly a unique twist. Now Tim has two families. It's good to see the civilian side to these characters. I hope Tim is able to persuade his dad to move to Gotham—I like him as Robin. Batman has assembled quite a team: Robin, Ace, Harold and Alfred. I expect it will be hard for Tim to get out with Batman, but I hope he doesn't disappear altogether. Will he tell his dad about his night job?

"To the Father I Never Knew..." is my favorite Batman tale to date. From the cover to the last page I was totally enthralled. The action, the look into Tim's thoughts, the interaction with Bruce/Batman and Tim/Robin—this was one great story! My only complaint is Batman saying "neat!" after rounding up Marin and the hoods. I just don't see Batman saying "neat." Other than that, an excellent story all around. Keep up the good work!

Jason Pettis
Cheyenne, Wyoming

P.S. I love the Ace and Harold background scene in the Batcave. Let's see more of these guys. You got 'em, so use 'em!

Neat!

Sirs...

BATMAN #480 was an *excellent* read! The art and color were just brilliant, too. Wow! Can it get better? Well...

I may be jumping the gun here, but it looks like Tim will be sneaking out at night to go play with Batman. Sort of what went on with Frank Miller's Dark Knight and Carrie Kelley. I didn't like it then (it also

didn't help to have a *girl* Robin—SICK!) and I still don't like it. The problem is that Tim just can't leave his dad to live with Bruce (though Tim's parents left *him*...). Can't you just, well, kill off Tim's dad? It shouldn't be too hard. It's not like you've never killed off someone (I'll be nice and *not* go into that).

Whereas nobody will be able to hold a candle to Dick Grayson, I do like Tim. He's making a really good Robin, an asset instead of a hindrance. Batman needs him, Alfred needs him—heck, we the readers/fans need him. Except for maybe his hair...*please* have Bruce or someone make Tim change the style. Only punks wear it that way. We *must* get out of the mold that your readers are mostly "kids." Just a bit more conservative. Okay? Think about it.

Michelle E. Koller
Romeo, Michigan

And people think we're *bloodthirsty.*

Dear Bat-People,

BATMAN #480 was one excellent comic! Alan's story, as usual, speaks for itself, but I would like to comment on Jim's art.

WOW!!! Jim, *please* keep inking your pencils. It brings back fond memories of the BRAVE AND BOLD stories I read as a little Batster. Ahh, I guess you *can* go home again.

Lastly, the scene with Harold and Ace on pages 8 and 9 was absolutely priceless. Thank you.

Dave Wright
Wilmington, Delaware

Our pleasure.

Dear Denny and Scott,

BATMAN #480 is the story that was crying to be done. Ever since you guys kept Tim's father alive, I knew there must come a time when his father would grow jealous of Bruce Wayne. I'm so glad you're dealing with this.

Also, I loved Jim Aparo's addition to the story: Harold teasing the "bat-hound" and then receiving his comeuppance. I died laughing. Well done! This was the best Batman issue I've read in over a year. And that's saying a lot!

Richmond West
Gadsden, Alabama

While Jim handled it beautifully (as he does pretty much everything), let the record show that the Harold and Ace subplot was Alan's idea, that teasing little devil.

Dear People in Control of Batman,

Often times I have read a BATMAN (or DETECTIVE) and have had many thoughts on the comic that I would like to have shared. But not until now, not until #480, have I been so inspired that I actually wrote. Let me start off by informing you that I am one of the Batman readers that would belong to the "traditionals club" if there were such a thing. I believe that Dick Grayson should be the only Robin for Batman, I like the stories best that have the Joker, Penguin or the Riddler, and I prefer a Batmobile that doesn't look like a spaceship.

However, I am also pretty open-minded and I realize that these are just my opinions. I've enjoyed seeing what the different Batmobiles do and look like, I've enjoyed seeing what new and dangerous badguys can put Batman and Robin in a bind, and hardest of all, I've accepted that Dick Grayson will never be Robin again (unless, of course, you all decide that the best maneuver would be to bring him back—just giving some suggestions). Now, when you first brought Tim on as Robin I thought, "My gosh, another one." But I agreed it was necessary and inevitable. I looked for the good things in Tim and did not immediately think that he was just the greatest guy ever to come around, but I must also say that I was not at all disappointed with the way he was working out. I liked and agreed with everything done with Tim so far, but he had not yet earned my respect. Then I read #480!

I opened it to get a glance at it and noticed that it was a lot about Tim. I thought to myself, "Good. Maybe this will help me learn what I need to know about Tim." It didn't really teach me a lot of unknown facts, but I sure came to respect Tim as Robin and as a good friend of Bruce Wayne. He has been given a deal in life that in some ways should be terrific, yet in others isn't as good as you think it would be, and these are problems where being a skilled fighter or a great detective can't help a lot. I hope you will continue to have Tim be as great in the near and distant future as he's been in the recent past.

To sum up: I hope Bruce and Tim's relationships as just friends and as Batman and Robin stay strong and don't get messed up like Bruce and Dick's did. Anyway, thanks for listening and for all the terrific plots and artwork, and keep the good ones coming.

Maurice Harleman
Yakima, Washington

P.S. Do you guys correct spelling errors?

Know, wee nevver dew. Sorrie. Thanx fer righting, tho.

Dear Denny and Scott,

With Alan's final script on this title for the foreseeable future, we are treated to a nice little wrap-up in the life of Tim Drake. Alan closes this particular chapter, yet leaves a path full of all-new development for Doug and Chuck over at 'TEC.

In last summer's annuals, Robin was shown as an adult *and* a senator (or somesuch bureaucratic puppet...I mean figure). Now, with Tim's eventual rising through the ranks of Drake Industries, we will be able to view firsthand his maturing process—something I very much look forward to.

Even though I'm grieving over the loss of Alan, I know this book will do fine with Doug. Thanks, Alan, for some wonderful stories—I can't wait for SHADOW OF THE BAT! Welcome aboard, Doug—may you still be able to write in the same caliber as was shown back in BATMAN #400, one of my personal favorite Bat-stories.

Joe Kucharski, III
Haddon Hts., New Jersey

As you know by now, Joe, Doug isn't still writing at that level—he's even better, impossible as it seems. And stay tuned, it only goes up from here.

DEAR ABBY DEPT: Fanteen Jonah Horowitz requests pen pals, so if you like the Batman books (and who doesn't?), JLI, Golden Age stuff, THE DEMON, FLASH and THE TITANS, drop him a line at 414 Barton Ave., Evanston, IL 60202.

OVER IN SHADOW: Guys like the Joker and the Penguin get all the good press and the big jobs. It's got so your average working criminal can't hardly get a break. But maybe if Killer Moth, Calendar Man and Catman teamed up, then they'd get some respect! Especially if they kidnap the mayor and a certain millionaire. It's in SHADOW OF THE BAT #7, "Misfits," brought to you by Alan Grant and Tim Sale, on sale now.

OVER IN DETECTIVE: In order to bust a gang of thugs with diplomatic immunity, the Batman is forced to accept the help of a partner—the Huntress! It's in DETECTIVE COMICS #653, by Chuck Dixon, Scott Hanna and guest artist Graham Nolan, on sale now.

NEXT ISSUE: There's a new superhero in town—and Robin's got to train him! Yes, hot off his amazing miniseries, it's the Gotham City debut of AZRAEL! That's right, Azrael! You heard it—Azrael! For those in the back row, I say again: Azrael!!! Robin shows him the ropes as they stumble on an industrial espionage scheme, and you just know there's going to be lots o' action from two great heroes who go great together. It's all in BATMAN #488, "Costumes," by Doug Moench and Jim Aparo.

—Scott Peterson
would die for air conditioning